Self-reported honesty and measured trust
An experiment in comparing head teachers’ self-reported honesty and trust as measured in job satisfaction survey in compulsory schools in Reykjavík, Iceland.

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Thank you,
Ómar Órn Magnússon
Abstract

Previous research indicates that trust between head teachers and staff in schools is essential and that it affects students’ learning. Honesty is one precondition for trust and scholars argue that head teachers need to be honest to be able to build up and sustain trust. Nevertheless, there is a debate on how to measure honesty or how to evaluate if a person is honest or not. Self-reporting character strengths tests have been used for the task, for example in recruitment processes. Still, even scholars who have developed such tests stress the importance of comparing the results from self-reporting character strengths tests to other measurements that indicate their validity. The aim of this dissertation is to explore if there is a correlation between measured trust and head teachers’ self-reported honesty. “Is there a correlation between trust in compulsory schools in Reykjavík as measured in a job satisfaction survey and head teachers´ self-reported honesty?” is a fundamental question in the research. By exploring the state of trust in compulsory schools in Reykjavík, according to a recent job satisfaction survey, and compare to findings from a character strengths questionnaire used to measure self-reported character strengths amongst head teachers in Reykjavík this question is answered. In the research the hypothesis that there is a significant correlation between head teachers´ self-reported honesty and trust in schools was rejected. However, the hypothesis that there is not a significant correlation between head teachers´ self-reported honesty and trust in schools was confirmed. A Spearman´s rho data analysis revealed a weak negative correlation but it was not significant (r(22) = -.214 p = .316). Even if correlation was not measured significant in the present research it is important to note that it does not mean that there is not a correlation between honesty in leadership and trust in the workplace. The main findings are that there is good reason to use self-reporting character strengths tests in a delicate manner since it includes various complications. In this study the following factors affecting the findings were drawn forth for special discussions: 1) Tendencies in self-reporting honesty, 2) Lack of distribution in the data, and 3) Inconsistency in understanding of concepts. If educational authorities are to be better equipped to recruit leaders, not only based on what they can do but also who they are as persons, further research in the field is essential.
1. Introduction

In 2015 I was appointed as a head teacher in a secondary school in Reykjavík, Iceland, for a one year’s replacement. In my first week of practice, in August 2015, I was introduced to the results from a job satisfaction survey, performed in March and April the same year. The results were not good and I was told that lack of trust in the school would prevent the school to function as it should. After receiving advice on how to work towards turning around the development apparent in the job satisfaction results, I sat down, a bit overwhelmed, and thought about what I could do and how I should behave to build up trust in this school. I came up with all kind of ideas, and when thinking back some of them sound ridiculous. To cut the story short, trust was measured strong in the school in a follow up survey the year after. I then asked some of the staff what had changed and whether they thought something I did had mattered. Again many and different ideas were mentioned but most remarkably some of the staff mentioned that it was perhaps not a question of specific things I did as a head teacher but rather what kind of a person I appear to be. They mentioned important personality traits or character strengths such as reliability, openness and honesty. Since then I often think about how it might be possible to ensure that leaders, or people in certain professions, possess certain character strengths and how it might be possible for them to develop or grow further.

School leadership is not only an extremely important task but also a complicated one. Its complexity is perhaps largely due to the intertwining of everything the head teacher does with people. The head teacher needs to be able to deal with his staff, students, parents and policymakers all at the same time and even sometimes when different parties have different interests. The head teacher is the educational leader in the school
and there is a general consensus amongst scholars that the head teacher´s role is extremely important for educational outcome. It is important for the head teacher to lead educational discussions, bring about changes and communicate efficiently with different parties of the school community (Fullan, 2009; Hargreaves and Fink, 2012; Northhouse, 2016). Schools are complex organisations with multifaceted purpose and the leader needs to possess various skills to perform as expected. In recent leadership studies scholars have not only paid attention to leaders´ skills but also the importance of their character strengths (Hoy and Tschannen-Moran, 2003; Peterson and Seligman, 2004; Handford and Leithwood, 2013; Northhouse, 2016), claiming that leadership is not just about what you can do as a person but also who you are.

Since character strengths are important in leadership, it must be regarded important to evaluate character strengths for recruitment or training. Various tools and methods are available and used across the corporate and government sectors but there is an ongoing academic discussion about their validity (Money, Hillenbrand and Da Camara, 2009; Roulin, Bangerter, and Levanshina, 2014). The most common method to evaluate character strengths is self-reporting tests. Scholars have argued the importance of comparing the results from such tests with separate measurements or behavioural inspections to test their validity. In this current research an attempt is made to do so by testing the correlation between measured trust in all 36 compulsory schools in Reykjavík, Iceland, and the head teachers´ self-reported honesty. Honesty is one of 24 character strengths, defined by the Values in Actions inventory (Park and Peterson, 2009) and is regarded as one of five preconditions of trust in the Omnibus-T trust scale for schools (Hoy and Tschannen-Moran, 2004). The assumption is, therefore, that a head teacher needs to be honest to be able to build up and sustain trust in a school but
the aim of this paper is to investigate whether self-reported test is a good method to evaluate head teachers’ honesty.

The subjects of the study are all compulsory schools in Reykjavík, the capital of Iceland. Reykjavík is a small city with 123,000 inhabitants. There are 36 compulsory public schools in the city and around 14,500 students. In Iceland, compulsory education is 10 years and the students’ age is from 6 to 16 years. Usually the compulsory schools include all the 10 year groups but there are, nevertheless, schools that only teach children in year groups 1 to 7 and others that teach year groups 8 to 10, similar to the primary and secondary schools arrangement in England. All schools in Reykjavík are what is called neighbourhood schools, meaning that children in the defined neighbourhood are entitled to go to that specific school. Equity in education is measured amongst the highest in the world in Icelandic schools (OECD, 2016) and the schools in Reykjavík are rather homogeneous even though in many ways each school has its distinctive attributes. The greatest variance between the 36 schools is perhaps the number of students which varies from around 150 to 700 students. All schools are inclusive schools with mixed abilities students (City of Reykjavík, 2017).

The overall structure of this study takes the form of six chapters, including the introduction as the first chapter and conclusion as the last one. In the second chapter the literature will be reviewed and academic foundation for the research made. The aim of that chapter is to discuss previous research in the field and try to define some key concepts. Through the literature review the importance of trust in schools will be explored, ideas about honesty in leadership and possible methods to evaluate trust and honesty. The third chapter is concerned with the methodology used for this study. In
the fourth chapter the findings will be presented and then further discussed in the fifth chapter. Following are the three research questions:

1. What is the state of trust in compulsory schools in Reykjavík according to a job satisfaction survey, carried out in March and April 2017?

2. What character strengths do head teachers in compulsory schools in Reykjavík consider to be most important for the ideal head teacher and how do head teachers conceive their own character strengths as measured with a self-reported questionnaire and ranking of character strengths?

3. Is there a correlation between trust in compulsory schools in Reykjavík as measured in job satisfaction survey and head teachers’ self-reported honesty?

In regard to the last question the exclusive and exhaustive Spearman’s null and alternative hypothesis are (using a two tailed test):

- $H_0: \rho = 0$
  There is not a significant correlation between the head teacher’s self-reported honesty and trust in the school.

- $H_a: \rho \neq 0$
  There is a significant correlation between the head teacher’s self-reported honesty and trust in the school.

This study uses a quantitative approach but to triangulate the data and deepen the findings, three interviews were added to the research methods. Since the majority of the data is of quantitative nature and the research methods are mainly quantitative it should be considered as a quantitative rather than mixed methods research, even if a small portion of the data is of qualitative nature. Data for this study derive from a
recent job satisfaction survey performed by Reykjavík Human Recourse Department, a questionnaire developed and carried out by the researcher and three interviews with head teachers in Reykjavík. It is important for this research to gain access to the recent job satisfaction survey including responses from all staff in compulsory schools in Reykjavík. Using that data enables an investigation where self-reported honesty is compared with measured trust whereas most research has explored either of the two individually. This investigation will therefore enhance our understanding of the correlation between the two or the validity of self-reporting honesty measurements. Nevertheless, it has to be noted that this is a small scale research that will give important information but should not be used to generalise or raise extensive presumptions.
2. Literature Review

There is considerable literature available on trust and honesty. The concepts have been investigated in various academic disciplines, most often independently so there is not much empirical research available about how honesty and trust is linked. On the following pages the literature for this research will be reviewed. The aim of the review is to explore what is already known about the research topic, put it in an academic context and build a foundation for the research. Various ideas about how to define trust and honesty will be evaluated, how scholars have attempted to measure the concepts and ideas on how and why they are related.

2.1. Trust

Trust is considered to be a necessary precondition for any society, organisation or personal relationship to flourish. Trust is essential for people to form relationships but it can vary from one situation to another how important trust is. In relationships where common interests are scarce, trust has lower importance than where interests are high. Research on trust in the field of social science emerged in the mid-20th century out of the escalating suspicion of the Cold War. Prior to that trust was considered as a phenomenon only in philosophy. Even if trust was first explored in social studies as a societal concept, research on trust turned to interpersonal relationships in the early 1980s with soaring divorce rates and radical changes in American family matters. In the 1990s the focus of trust research shifted to organisational trust in workplaces, institutions and schools for example (Hoy & Tschannen-Moran, 1999). In social science trust has been explored is three ways; as an intra-organisational phenomenon, inter-organisational phenomenon and as trust between organisations and their
customers (Dietz & Hartog, 2006). This research explores trust between employees and supervisors, or intra-organisational trust.

2.1.1. A definition

According to the Cambridge dictionary trust is the belief that someone is good and honest and will not harm you, or that something is safe and reliable (Cambridge Dictionary - Free English Dictionary, 2017). Trust is a socio-psychological phenomenon concerning interactive communications, experience or relationships between people or within any form of a society. The word is used as a noun or a verb but can also take the form of an adjective when we claim that someone is trustworthy meaning that he or she is sound, reliable, truthful, firm and faithful. The synonyms of trust are distrust or betrayal, originated from unfaithfulness, whereas trust is built up with honesty (Hargreaves and Fink, 2006). Trust is an established concept in our minds and known in all societies around the world and throughout history but there is still a problem with applying it in an academic manner since it includes a personalised orientation towards human behaviour in different surroundings. In a philosophical discussion about trust and antitrust Anette Baier (1986, pp. 233-234) argues that we are so familiar with the phenomenon of trust “… that we scarcely notice its presence and its variety”. Different philosophical and sociological definitions of trust indicate how deep and multifaceted the concept is, subject to conditions in which trust is defined (see for example: Mayer, Davis and Shoorman, 1995; Fukuyama, 1995; Mishra, 1996; Rotter, 1967; Tschannen-Moran, 2014; Hardin, 2008). According to Rempel, Holmes and Zanna (1985) trust is necessary to human survival and functioning in a society because it reduces uncertainty and establishes confidence that
expectations to others will be met. In that way trust maintains order and is essential for effective cooperation and communication (Baier, 1986). In the absence of trust people are cautious, unwilling to take risks and demand greater protections against betrayal in order to defend their interests (Tyler and Kramer, 1996).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Definition</th>
<th>Practice</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rotter, 1967, p. 651</td>
<td>“… an expectancy held by an individual or a group that the word, promise, verbal or written statement of another individual or group can be relied upon”</td>
<td>Psychology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baier, 1986, p. 10</td>
<td>“Trust … is accepted vulnerability to another´s possible but not expected ill will (or lack of good will) toward one.”</td>
<td>Philosophy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fukuyama, 1995, p. 26</td>
<td>“The expectation that arises within a community of regular, honest, and cooperative behavior, based on commonly shared norms, on the part of other members of the community”</td>
<td>Sociology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mayer, Davis, &amp; Schoorman, 1995, p. 712.</td>
<td>“… the willingness of a party to be vulnerable to the actions of another party based on the expectation that the other party will perform a particular action important to the trustor, irrespective of the ability to monitor or control that other party.”</td>
<td>Organizational Sociology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mishra, 1996, p. 265</td>
<td>“Trust is one party’s willingness to be vulnerable to another party based on the belief that the latter party is 1) competent, 2) open, 3) concerned, and 4) reliable”</td>
<td>Organizational Sociology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hoy &amp; Tschannen-Moran, 1999, p. 189.</td>
<td>“Trust is an individual’s or group’s willingness to be vulnerable to another party based on the confidence that the latter party is benevolent, reliable, competent, honest and open”</td>
<td>Education</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1: Various definitions of trust from different disciplines in a chronological order.

Most of the literature on trust examines the concept as a multi-faceted and complex one, whether the context is interpersonal, organisational or societal (see for example: Mayer, Davis and Shoorman, 1995; Fukuyama, 1995; Mishra, 1996; Rotter, 1967; Tschannen-Moran, 2014; Hardin, 2008). In 1999, when positive psychology was just being introduced, Hoy and Tschannen-Moran (1999) published an article introducing their definition of trust, and the Omnibus T-scale, a tool to measure trust in schools. Their short definition is that trust “is an individual’s or group’s willingness to be
vulnerable to another party based on the confidence that the latter party is benevolent, reliable, competent, honest and open” (Hoy and Tschannen-Moran, 1999, p. 189). Their five claimed preconditions for trust are included in the definition but they are; benevolence, reliability, competence, honesty and openness. In an organisational context where trust between a leader and the led, or head teacher and staff, is considered it can be said that preconditions for trust to flourish is that the leader possesses certain skills, competence and character strengths to be able to demonstrate the five preconditions of trust. In an interaction of those five conditions, trust emerges when members of the organisation are prepared to be vulnerable to each other, believing others are benevolent, reliable, competent, honest and open. That situation is what Hoy and Tschannen-Morgan consider to be trust. They claim that vulnerability is the most common aspect of definitions of trust across the literature. In the contemporary western world handshake is a gesture of trust but according to folklore it derives from soldiers showing that they do not carry weapons. In that way the handshake is a gesture of vulnerability. Still it has to be noted that vulnerability must be voluntary since the decision to place oneself at risk to another could be based on “despair, conformity, impulsivity, innocence, virtue, faith, masochism, or confidence” according to Deutch (1960, p. 124).

Even if Hoy’s and Tschannen-Moran’s definition of trust and the idea of the five preconditions is widely used throughout the literature there are various other views to be found. Mayer, Davis and Schoorman (1995) consider reliability, competence and benevolence as the most important elements of trust while Dietz and Hartog (2006) argue that integrity, benevolence, competence and predictability are the main dimensions. In an interesting research by Hanford and Leithwood (2012), where 24
teachers were interviewed to examine why teachers trust school leaders, they argue that most influential are indicators of competence, consistency, reliability, openness, respect and honesty/integrity. Going through 18 studies in their research review they identified 13 characteristics named as preconditions for trust in a leader. Out of the 13 characteristics competence and honesty/integrity are most often named (Hanford and Leithwood, 2012).

2.1.2. Trust and school improvement

To be able to understand the link between trust and school improvement the idea of collective trust needs to be introduced. Collective trust is a common and often mutual perception within a group, towards another group or a person. Example of this is collective trust from staff towards a head teacher. Collective trust is likely to increase the possibility of risk-taking and compliance within the group and compliance which enables a leader to lead the group (Bryk and Schneider, 2002).

Goddard et al. (2009, p. 293) claim that schools “are fundamentally social institutions that depend daily on the quality of the interpersonal relations with which they are imbued”. A substantial amount of research is available on school leadership and school improvement. Northouse (2016) and Hughes, Ginnett and Curphy (2012), seem to agree in their two distinctive definitions on leadership where Northouse (2016, p. 5) argues that leadership is “… a process whereby an individual influences a group of individuals to achieve a common goal” and Hughes, Ginnett, and Curphy’s (2012, p. 4) claim that leadership is ”… the process of influencing an organized group toward accomplishing its goals”. In recent literature, school leadership towards improvement
is often related to certain type of leadership such as distributed leadership, transformational leadership or servant leadership for example. Those ideas or leadership theories all include the concept of staff empowerment aiming for increased participation of staff in the improvement process (Sergiovanni, 2005). When staff empowerment is increased through trust with a common vision and aim in place, the leader is in fact increasing the leading power. Reyes, Alexander and Diem (2008) claim, even if it might sound like a contradiction, that the leader is in that way increasing or securing his or her own power of the common vision. This interaction is retained with trust. It makes all communication easier, increases the efficiency, makes it more meaningful and performance oriented. Without trust, communications are bound to end up in conflict, preventing any development or school improvement (Tschannen-Moran, 2004; Precey, 2012).

Therefore, trust in organisations can be considered as a “lubricant” for interactions (Fukuyama, 1995) and enabler of change, leading to organisational improvements. It might seem difficult to pinpoint exactly how trust affects school improvement but there is, nevertheless, some research available confirming that there is a positive correlation between trust and school improvement. Bryk and Schneider (2003) claimed, in a report following an intensive case study and longitudinal statistical analysis from more than 400 Chicago elementary schools, that the single most effective influence of increased student performance was trust. They measured trust amongst different bodies of the school community and found out that trust between staff and head teacher was a necessary precondition for building a professional community and enhancing teachers’ professionalism. Furthermore, Bryk and Schneider (2003) argued that
distrust did not only result in stagnation of students´ improvement but in regression of academic performance. In their findings, Bryk and Schneider (2003, pp. 42-43) claim:

The myriad social exchanges that make up daily life in a school community fuse into distinct social patterns that can generate organization-wide resources. Collective decision making with broad teacher buy-in, a crucial ingredient for reform occurs more readily in schools with strong relational trust. In contrast the absence of trust … provoke sustained controversy around resolving even such relatively simple problems as the arrangements for a kindergarten graduation ceremony.

Karen S. Luis (2007) researched trust in schools with a narrower perspective when she examined five schools and their abilities to adopt new ideas in education by examining only trust between head teachers and staff. Two of the schools were characterised by both high level of trust and willingness to change while high level of distrust distinguished the other three schools. Her findings were that the schools characterised by trust were better able to deal with and implement change and teachers were more prepared to take risk in their work with the intention to improve the students´ learning. Like Bryk and Schneider, Louis (2007) noted that trust increases teachers´ professionalism. In other studies, researching trust and school leadership, there is evidence of relationship between high level of trust and student achievement (Goddard, 2003), leadership success (Hoy, Tarter and Hoy, 2006) and improved teacher morale (Handford and Leithwood, 2013).
2.1.3. How to measure trust?

Trust as a phenomenon is a feeling and can only be identified by how it is perceived. In order to build up trust a leader can, in good faith, act in a certain way, but trust is not present between a head teacher and staff unless the staff experiences trust. Given the complexity of trust, already discussed, it might be questionable to measure it. Whether or not we believe it is possible to measure such a subjective concept as trust, it is important to not only try to understand what it is but also to estimate if it is present in certain circumstances. As human beings we are constantly trying to understand the environment around us better and asking questions that might affect our life in social and physical manner. Schools are important organisations in so many ways and it is important to understand how it is possible to improve them as such. Since we have evidence of the importance of trust in schools it must be important to explore how trust is built up and maintained and what can be done to enhance that process.

Various methods have been used in attempts to measure trust. Connel, Ferres and Travaglione (2003) discuss 16 different methods in their research article and, similarly, Tschannen-Moran and Hoy (2000) listed up 12 different methods in their writings. Many of the methods on Tschannen-Moran and Hoy´s list and all of the ones on Connel, Ferres and Travaglione´s list only measured trust from the perspective of interpersonal communications but not as a social concept within organisations. The first method developed specifically to measure trust in schools was put forth by Bryk and Schneider in 2002. Their measurement consisted of three extensive questionnaires to measure trust between; 1) head teacher and staff, 2) trust within the group of staff and 3) trust between the teachers and parents as experienced by teachers (Bryk and Schneider, 2002). One year later, or in 2003, Hoy and Tschannen-Moran published a
research based on their new method of measuring trust in schools, using the Omnibus T-scale (Hoy and Tschannen-Moran, 2003).

Hoy and Tschannen-Moran assume in their Omnibus T-scale that there are five preconditions for trust in organisations, drawing from their and others previous research. The first one is benevolence, meaning to be confident that something one cares about or one’s well-being will be protected by the trusted one. The second is reliability since trust is based on consistency of behaviour and knowing what to expect from others. The third is competence based on the idea that a certain level of skill is needed in fulfilling expectations. Hoy and Tschannen-Moran claim that good intentions are not always enough. Individuals need an ability to perform what is expected of them to receive trust. The fourth precondition is openness meaning that people need to be able to communicate openly and candidly without being afraid of the information exchanged will be exploited. The fifth is honesty which Hoy and Tschannen-Moran claim describes the person’s character. Integrity and authenticity are terms also used to explain this character strength. Even if Hoy and Tschannen-Moran claim honesty is one of five preconditions for trust they argue that honesty is a pivotal precondition for trust (Hoy and Tschannen-Moran, 2003). In the same manner, Tschannen-Moran and Gareis (2015) claim that honesty is a fundamental facet of trust. They go on and argue that to be trusted “…principals must be honest in their interactions with teachers. Honest behavior is anchored in moral principles and is cultivated through behaviors that demonstrate integrity of character, authenticity, and accountability for one’s actions” (Tschannen-Moran and Gareis, 2015, p. 260). On the other hand, Tschannen-Moran and Gareis argue that “… dishonest behavior may be more damaging to trust than lapses in other facets because it is read as an indictment
of the person’s character. Once a principal has been caught in a lie and the faculty has lost faith in the word of their principal, it will be hard for them to earn or regain trust because language is an essential tool that leaders must use to lead and inspire people” (Tschannen-Moran and Gareis, 2015, p. 260).

The Omnibus T-scale questionnaire consists of 26 statements where 8 are concerned with the staff’s trust in the head teacher (Hoy and Tschannen-Moran, 2003). It is interesting to see that the statements in the questionnaire are not addressed towards the respondent’s own view of the head teacher but generally about the respondent’s believes. The wording of the statements is for example; Teachers in this school trust the head teacher but not; I trust the head teacher. Since trust is a matter of individual experience it is interesting to see that Hoy and Tschannen-Moran decide to request respondents to act on what they think is the general consensus in the workplace rather than their own experience or feeling. The only reason for that decision is to avoid personal experience, good, bad or even bitter, to affect the teacher’s answers, but trust is still ultimately built on personal experience. If a questionnaire is used amongst the whole group of teachers in a school it must be more appropriate to ask the teachers about their own view of their personal trust towards the head teacher, whatever experience or incidents it is based on, rather than to ask them to speculate about others.

Furthermore, it has to be considered that the Omnibus T-scale, and most of the trust measurement methods available, is only designed to measure trust at a particular time. Rempel, Holmes and Zanna (1985) argue that trust will always depend on the individual’s experience in the past but also expectations for the future. Different incidents in personal relations can affect trust or distrust in different ways and people
might regard similar incidents in different manner. We have some information through
recent research on how leaders can build up trust and indications about the importance
of certain character strengths, such as honesty. Therefore, when recruiting head
teachers, it should be an important factor to estimate their character strengths. In recent
years it has become more common in recruitment processes to estimate applicants’
character (see for example: Wilner et al., 2016; Patterson et al., 2015; Sosik, Gentry
and Chun, 2012). For various reasons it is considered important but at the same time
controversial (Money, Hillenbrand and Da Camara, 2009; Roulin, Bangerter, and
Levanshina, 2014). There are many methods available and character strengths are not
only measured amongst leaders. Perhaps more often it is done when recruiting
subordinates to try to analyse if they are honest and reliable, for example. There are
many methods available and the most common is self-reporting questionnaires. Other
ways to analyse people’s character strengths are interviews, professional dilemmas to
explore the role of character strengths in decision making and some kind of
background checks (see: Wilner et al., 2016; Patterson et al., 2015; Sosik, Gentry and
Chun, 2012). All methods have some obvious limitations related to validity, reliability
and even legality. Critics have argued that personality or character strength tests may
even, in some instances, only measure mood rather than personality traits or character
strengths while proponents claim that if based on a sound research those assessments
are efficient and predictive of job success (see for example: Money, Hillenbrand and
Da Camara, 2009; Roulin, Bangerter, and Levanshina, 2014; Wilner et al., 2016;
Patterson et al., 2015; Sosik, Gentry and Chun, 2012; Xu and Ma, 2014).
2.2. Character strengths and leadership

The literature on virtues and character strengths draws its ideas in one way or another from Aristotle and Greek philosophy. Kristján Kristjánsson (2013), philosopher at the Jubilee Centre for Character and Virtues, at the University of Birmingham, argues that even if virtues or character strengths are considered as vague or open-textured concepts they have “...comparatively stable meaning in mainstream academic discourse” (Kristjánsson, 2013, p. 270). Since Allport (1937) came forth with the definition of character in the 1930s as personality evaluated, and personality, in turn, as character devaluated, a concise and transparent specification has been apparent. Given this definition, Allport claimed that character had nothing to do with psychology. That was eighty years ago and since then academic interest in character within psychology has increased, especially with the introduction of positive psychology around the turn of the last millennium.

Following the introduction of the Big Five model of personality (Goldberg, 1990) an expansion has been in research arguing the importance of certain personality aspects and character strengths for leadership. To name but few Judge et al. (2002) use meta-analysis and argue that extraversion, openness, conscientiousness, and emotional stability are associated with leadership emergence and furthermore that neuroticism is negatively correlated. Hendricks and Payne (2007) examine through inspection leadership personalities and effectiveness, focusing on goal orientation, leadership self-efficacy and motivation to lead, and find similar correlation as Judge et al. (2002). Interestingly, Hendricks and Payne use the terms personality and characteristics equivalently, contrary to Allport’s (1937) definition. Similarly, De Hoogh et al. (2005) consider extraversion a character strength while Allport (1937) actually uses that as
an example of personality features but not a character strength. Despite the concept confusion De Hoogh’s et al. (2005) findings are that the Big Five personality features are related to effectiveness in leadership and could enhance dynamic work environment in organisations. These examples show the usefulness of examining personality features that predict leadership success. Since successful leadership is not only determined by evaluating skills or competence it must be important to try as well to evaluate other aspects such as personality and character.

Most theorists argue that moral competence or character strength is not reflected by exploring how individuals think about moral dilemmas but rather how people behave in certain real circumstances (Park and Peterson, 2006). When faced with real circumstances other factors than moral reasoning may affect moral resolution, such as empathy, sympathy and perspective taking (Murphy et al., 1999; Park and Peterson, 2006). Nedkovski et al. (2017) studied ethical climate, deriving from character strengths such as kindness, fairness and humility, on trust. They claim that the literature on the matter is scarce, fragmented and under-theorised and name a few recent research and consider the focus in them too wide and the content too narrow, arguing that generalisations are impossible. The biggest shortcoming Nedkovski et al. (2017) mention is that even if some scholars have successfully linked trust with various practises, personalities and characteristics there is little theory provided for why the link might occur. This dilemma is the constant struggle of research in the complex environment of sociology and perhaps scholars will only approach the solution but never really reach it. Measuring character strength is definitely not a straight forward process but even if attempts in this regard only bring about further knowledge in the field it is certainly worth the while.
For this current study, there is vast amount of literature on organisational trust available and growing amount of literature on trust in schools and its effect on teachers’ and students’ achievements. The literature on character in leadership is emerging but not extensive. Large portion of it derives from practitioners in the corporate field and is only partly based on academic research (see for example: George, 2003; Cashman, 2003; Gini and Green, 2013). Scholars in the field complain about the lack of empirical research which would add to the effort of bridging the gap in our knowledge in the field (De Hoogh et al., 2005; Park and Peterson, 2006; Hendricks and Payne, 2007; Nedkovski et al., 2017). Scholars have argued that even if there is an emerging literature available on leadership effects and leaders´ character strengths there is a call for researchers to explain how character strengths affects leadership outcomes (Judge et al., 2002; Hendricks and Payne, 2007). To be able to address that issue an attempt has to be made to measure character strengths.

2.3. How to measure character strengths?

A major extensive longitude research within the discipline of positive psychology is the work of Peterson and Seligman in developing a classification of strengths and virtues and identifying character strengths to be considered for an inclusion within the classification of the Values in Action inventory (Peterson and Seligman, 2004). This was done through the process of “... numerous iterative rounds of brainstorming; extensive literature searches of the psychology, philosophy, and youth development literatures; reviews of historical inventories of strengths and virtues; consideration of the goals of character education programs and social work interventions from a
strengths-based perspective; and discussion with conference participants, among numerous other strategies” (Linley et al., 2007, p. 342). Even if Peterson and Seligman are unambiguous in claiming that they do not consider their classification and list of characters as final or definitive, it is certainly an important assessment tool for researchers interested in character strengths. The following 24 character strengths or traits are the ones Peterson and Seligman have identified in six categories of core virtues (Park and Peterson, 2009, p. 2-3):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Wisdom and knowledge</th>
<th>Courage</th>
<th>Humanity</th>
<th>Justice</th>
<th>Temperance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Creativity</td>
<td>Honesty</td>
<td>Kindness</td>
<td>Fairness</td>
<td>Forgiveness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Curiosity</td>
<td>Bravery</td>
<td>Love</td>
<td>Leadership</td>
<td>Modesty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Open-mindedness</td>
<td>Persistence</td>
<td>Social intelligence</td>
<td>Teamwork</td>
<td>Prudence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Love of learning</td>
<td>Zest</td>
<td>Being aware of the motives and feelings of self and others.</td>
<td>Temperance</td>
<td>Forgiving those who have done wrong.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perspective</td>
<td>Courage</td>
<td>Being able to provide wise counsel to others.</td>
<td>Justice</td>
<td>Treating all people the same according to notions of fairness and justice.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Honesty</td>
<td>Speaking the truth and presenting oneself in a genuine way.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Letting one’s accomplishments speak for themselves.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Bravery</td>
<td>Not shrinking from threat, challenge, difficulty, or pain.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Being careful about one’s choices; not saying or doing things that might later be regretted.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The following are the character strengths or traits identified in six categories of core virtues:

- **Wisdom and knowledge**
  - Creativity: Thinking of novel and productive ways to do things.
  - Curiosity: Taking an interest in all of ongoing experience.
  - Open-mindedness: Thinking things through and examining them from all sides.
  - Love of learning: Mastering new skills, topics, and bodies of knowledge.
  - Perspective: Being able to provide wise counsel to others.

- **Courage**
  - Honesty: Speaking the truth and presenting oneself in a genuine way.
  - Bravery: Not shrinking from threat, challenge, difficulty, or pain.
  - Persistence: Finishing what one starts.
  - Zest: Approaching life with excitement and energy.

- **Humanity**
  - Kindness: Doing favors and good deeds for others.
  - Love: Valuing close relations with others.
  - Social intelligence: Being aware of the motives and feelings of self and others.

- **Justice**
  - Fairness: Treating all people the same according to notions of fairness and justice.
  - Leadership: Organizing group activities and seeing that they happen.
  - Teamwork: Working well as member of a group or team.

- **Temperance**
  - Forgiveness: Forgiving those who have done wrong.
  - Modesty: Letting one’s accomplishments speak for themselves.
  - Prudence: Being careful about one’s choices; not saying or doing things that might later be regretted.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Character Strength</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Self-regulation</td>
<td>Regulating what one feels and does.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transcendence</td>
<td>Notice and appreciating beauty, excellence, and/or skilled performance in all domains of life.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gratitude</td>
<td>Being aware of and thankful for the good things that happen.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hope</td>
<td>Expecting the best and working to achieve it.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Humor</td>
<td>Liking to laugh and joke; bringing smiles to other people.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religiousness</td>
<td>Having coherent beliefs about the higher purpose and meaning of life.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2: Values on Action classification of character strengths.

Following the research of Peterson and Seligman and the making of the list of character strengths, Peterson and Park (2009) continued the work and developed ways to assess character strengths. Even though the development of the assessment tool or the Values in Action questionnaire consists of a thorough longitudinal research, Peterson and Park are modest or cautious when they claim that their work is “...an aspirational classification, meaning that it attempted to specify mutually exclusive and exhaustive categories of moral traits without claiming finality or a deep theory” (Peterson and Park, 2009, p. 27). Since the Values in Action questionnaire was first published online in 2009 over 4 million people have participated and data from the Values in Action dataset has been used in various research (see for example: Money, Hillenbrand and Da Camara, 2009, Park, Peterson and Seligman, 2006). Researchers have also used parts of the survey in their research like the Jubilee Centre for Character and Virtues at the University of Birmingham which has published research on character strengths amongst British teachers, lawyers and medical staff for example (Carr et al., 2015; Arthur et al., 2014; Kotzee et al., 2014).

In an empirical research from 2006, where Park, Peterson and Seligman examine scores from over 100,000 respondents from 54 nations, they find striking convergence
in the relative prevalence of the 24 different character strengths. In almost all nations, the most commonly endorsed character strengths were kindness, fairness, gratitude and honesty. There is a slight demographic correlation of character strengths where women score slightly higher than males for the interpersonal strengths of gratitude, kindness and love and older people score higher than younger people on strengths of temperance (Park, Peterson and Seligman, 2006).

In three different research on character strengths amongst teachers, lawyers and medical staff in Britain, performed by scholars at the Jubilee Centre for Character and Virtues, the Values in Action character list is used. One section of the research is where participants within each profession are asked to rank the most important character strengths for their profession as well as the ones that are their personal self-reported strengths. It is interesting to see in the findings that all professions consider honesty amongst the three strongest character strengths they possess whereas lawyers and medical staff also consider honesty amongst one of the three most important character strengths for their profession but not teachers. As a matter of fact, teachers do not consider honesty as one of the six most important character strengths for their profession (Carr et al., 2015; Arthur et al., 2014; Kotzee et al., 2014). In discussing the findings about teachers’ attitudes towards important character strengths for the ideal teacher, Arthur et al. (2014), claim that older and more experienced teachers in their research sample did rank honesty as one of the six most important character strengths. Even if it was only the sixth most important it is an indication of a development through experience in teaching where teachers acquire more “...understanding of the importance of emotional and relational dynamics in teaching ...” (Arthur et al., 2014, p. 26) as they progress.
2.4. Honesty

We all know what dishonesty is when we experience it. Honesty is sometimes more difficult to define. In a study on what part honesty plays in leadership emergence amongst business students working in groups, the researchers found indirect relationship but argued that acts of honesty were difficult to identify or hidden in interpersonal interactions while dishonesty is more easily observed (Ogunfowora and Bourdage, 2014). Still it is argued in the research that people try to hide their dishonesty from others which makes it even more difficult to determine if a person is honest or not, for example in job interviews (Roulin, Bangerter and Levashina, 2014).

Rotter (1967, p. 651) defines honesty as “… the expectancy that the word, promise, verbal or written statement of another individual or group can be relied upon”. Hoy and Tschannen-Moran (2003, p. 185) claim that honesty is also the “… acceptance of responsibility for one’s actions and not distorting the truth in order to shift blame to another”. In their original definition of honesty for the Values in Action inventory, Peterson and Seligman (2004) use the term integrity, and honesty and authenticity in brackets as a further explanation. Since then honesty has been adapted as the main term and the other two used as further explanation. In their consensual definition they claim (Peterson and Seligman, 2004, p. 16):

Integrity, authenticity, and honesty capture a character trait in which people are true to themselves, accurately representing - privately and publicly - their internal states, intentions, and commitments. Such persons accept and take responsibility for their feelings and behaviors, owning them, as it were, and reaping substantial benefits by so doing. Individuals with the character strength of integrity would strongly endorse such statements as these:

- It is more important to be myself than to be popular.
• When people keep telling the truth, things work out.
• I would never lie just to get something I wanted from someone.
• My life is guided and given meaning by my code of values.
• It is important to me to be open and honest about my feelings.
• I always follow through on my commitments, even when it costs me.
• “To thine own self be true, and thou canst not then be false to any man.”
• I dislike phonies who pretend to be what they are not.

There has been an ongoing academic discussion about whether honesty derives from moral reasoning with active resistance of temptations or from automatic process resulting from absence of temptations. The discussion is a cross-disciplinary and is not only covered in psychology (see for example: Bandura, 2001) and philosophy (see for example: Carr, 1991; Arthur, 2010) but also for example in neuroscience (Xu and Ma, 2014; Greene and Paxton, 2009). In a research in moral neuroscience, Greene and Paxton (2009) argue that people behaving in an honest manner using moral reasoning are in fact not honest but merely behaving honestly while people performing honesty as an automatic process are. It might be hard to get to this conclusion since an honest behaviour looks the same whether based on moral reasoning or automatic process. In their study they argue that since only people using moral reasoning behave dishonestly, it was possible to conclude that moral reasoning was effective in dishonest behaviour and therefore people using automatic process must be the only truly honest people. The method used was to examine neural activity in their 35 subjects confronted with opportunities for dishonest gain compared with a control group where there was no dishonest gain (Greene and Paxton, 2009). Reading the
research, it might be argued that in fact what the test measures is if participants tend
to lie to gain reward rather than if they are honest. To lie is a rather simple and straight
forward behaviour while honesty is a complex one including aspects of responsibility,
commitment and reliability for example.

2.5. Can state of honesty predict the level of trust?

Linley et al., (2007) reporting on research on character strengths in the UK, using the
Values in Action inventory measurement, discuss if character strengths can predict
goal attainment or occupational performance. They claim that the field of systematic
strengths research is in its infancy, but with the Values in Action measurement
researchers can begin to answer the different questions about character strength and
possible correlation with various things. In introducing the Values in Action method
of measuring character strength Peterson and Park (2009) argue that it is especially
important in future research to include the relationship of character strengths to hard
outcome measures where estimated strengths of character are compared with
measurements of actual behaviour. That can be done in various different ways using
different methods of measurement.

In recent research on the correlation between honesty/humility as a character strength
and leadership emergence Ogunfowora and Bourdage (2013) use the HEXACO model
(Ashton and Lee, 2007) to investigate what they call personality, but is in fact
character strength. According to the HEXACO model individuals that measure high
in honesty/humility are sincere, fair-minded and modest whereas individuals low in
honesty/humility are manipulative, insincere, greedy and pretentious (Ashton and Lee,
Ogunfowora and Bourdage (2013) findings are that honesty/humility is indirectly related to leadership emergence through what Bandura (2001) has identified as moral disengagement. In fact, the findings are that people low in honesty/humility “…should be less likely to emerge as leaders, due to an increased tendency to utilize moral disengagement” (Ogunfowora and Bourdage, 2013, p. 95). In the research, Ogunfowora and Bourdage (2013) do not find any correlation between self-rated or peer-rated honesty/humility and leadership emergence. However, they find a negative correlation between low honesty/humility and leadership emergence, meaning that participants low in honesty/humility are more unlikely to emerge as leaders. They discuss that perhaps honesty/humility is hard to identify and link to certain behavioural outcome whereas lack of it is easier to conceptualise and explore (Ogunfowora and Bourdage, 2013). That is interesting and goes in line with a recent Chinese neuroscience research by Xu and Ma (2014) on honesty in job interviews where they claim that honesty is hard to identify in job interviews whereas dishonesty can be identified. It is, nevertheless, important to keep in mind that Xu and Ma (2014) regard honesty only authentic when it is based on grace but not if it is based on will or moral reasoning.

In research on honesty in job interviews, Van Iddekinge, Raymark and Roth (2005) set out to evaluate the difference of response inflation in interviews and self-reporting measures of honesty and other character strengths. Based on older research claiming that response inflation is relatively high in self-reported measures where inflation is the change from how responders like to present themselves to how they truly think they are, Van Iddekinge, Raymark and Roth (2005) claim it is lower in interviews. There are many reasons for their findings but the most important is the different nature
of interviews and self-reporting tests. In interviews, the respondent is confronted by the interviewer but where self-reported measurements are used the respondent has greater control over the responses. Still, Van Iddekinge, Raymark and Roth (2005) emphasise the importance of using well-structured, standardised interviews since it is easy to lead the respondent in his answers if the interview is not well conducted. Furthermore, interviews have the disadvantage of being time consuming, costly and delicate when analysed. Therefore, self-reporting measurements is much more commonly used.

It is evident through presented literature that people tend to consider themselves honest. Various professions furthermore assume that honesty is required in their profession. That assumption and consideration appears in a study on 60 middle and senior managers in Europe, where the Values in Action inventory was used to measure the expression of their own character strengths and how they perceive their character strengths to match with the requirements of the workplace (Money, Hillenbrand and Da Camara, 2009). The findings were that the participants generally consider that there is a medium match between their character strengths and the requirements in their workplace. The only character strength where low match is measured is appreciation, but participants consider the requirements demand less appreciation than they consider they possess. The highest match is with honesty with the medium score of 4.41 out of 5 (Money, Hillenbrand and Da Camara, 2009). That means the participants consider themselves honest and furthermore that honesty is required from them in their job.
2.6. Main themes from presented researches

Trust has been researched as an intra-organisational phenomenon, inter-organisational phenomenon and as trust between organisations and their customers. The willingness to be vulnerable is a common feature in definitions of trust. Hoy and Tschannen-Moran (1999) add to their definition five preconditions for trust to evolve and be sustained but the preconditions are; benevolence, reliability, competence, honesty and openness. Intra-organisational trust is essential for organisations to function. Fukuyama (1995) regards trust as a “lubricant” for interactions and other scholars have reported on the effect of trust on communications, efficiency and staff performance. Research in school environment state that trust between staff and head teacher enhances students’ achievements but lack of trust causes regression in academic performance.

Honesty is one of the fundamental preconditions for trust. In order to build up trust in schools the head teacher needs to be honest. Peterson and Seligman (2004) define honesty as a character trait in which people are publicly and privately true to themselves and accept responsibility for their ideas and behaviour. Scholars argue that honesty is difficult to define and detect but dishonesty is obvious and easy to detect. Character strengths, like honesty, are difficult to measure for various reasons. Most common method is self-reported questionnaires. They are increasingly used in recruitment processes since research has indicated the importance of certain character strengths for certain professions or job tasks. Honesty usually scores high in self-reported character measurements. Scholars claim that it is important to compare results from self-reported questionnaires on character strengths to hard outcome.
measures where estimated strengths of character are compared with measurements of actual behaviour.
3. Methodology

The main aim of the research is to explore if there is a correlation between self-reported honesty amongst head teachers and measured trust in compulsory schools in Reykjavík, Iceland. In doing so, trust in schools, as measured in a recent job satisfaction survey, will be analysed and compared with results from a questionnaire and interviews performed by the researcher where self-reported honesty is explored as well as head teachers’ attitudes towards honesty in school leadership and their own character strengths. This section explains the research rationale, design and methods.

3.1. Rationale

According to research, as stated previously, trust in organisations is the resource that creates and consolidates energy, commitment and relationships. Trust is an essential precondition for change, development and well-being. Research has shown that there is correlation between trust in schools and students’ achievements. Head teachers hold a big responsibility in building up and sustaining trust in schools. That is not necessarily an easy task; nevertheless, scholars have identified a number of conditions for trust to flourish. If head teachers seek to build up their capacity to enhance trust in a workplace or if educational authorities are to ensure recruitment of head teachers capable of the task it is important to explore the conditions for trust and ways to estimate if or to what extent individuals possess certain character strengths needed. One of the prominent character strengths a leader needs to possess to build up and sustain trust is honesty.
Through data and interview analyses the aim of this research is to examine the state of trust in compulsory schools in Reykjavík, Iceland as measured in a recent job satisfaction survey and compare the findings with head teachers’ self-reported honesty as measured with a questionnaire based on the Values in Action inventory. In addition to that three interviews with head teachers in Reykjavík were conducted. Even if information gathered consists of both quantitative and qualitative data the research is predominantly a quantitative research rather than mixed methods research. The qualitative data gathered with interviews is still used to triangulate some data from the questionnaire and job satisfaction survey and to further deepen the information gathered through quantitative instruments.

The use of self-reporting questionnaire to measure character strengths has to be considered a controversial method even if used widely across the human resource management sector (see for example: Wilner et al., 2016; Patterson et al., 2015; Sosik, Gentry and Chun, 2012). Still, it is important to examine the validity of such a measurement. If there is a valid correlation, it can be assumed that self-reporting character questionnaires can be used in recruitment processes when assessing if individuals applying for leadership posts are likely to build up trust based on the results from such measurements.

### 3.2. Participants

The subjects of the research are all compulsory schools in Reykjavík, Iceland and their head teachers. There are 36 compulsory schools in Reykjavík, with around 14,500 students and 1,910 employers. Therefore, it is obvious that schools in Reykjavík are
relatively small with the average number of students being around 400. All the 36 head teachers were asked to participate in the research by answering the questionnaire. An invitation was initially sent by e-mail and then two reminders to try to boost participation. In the end 24 of the 36 head teachers took part in the questionnaire section, or 67%. For the semi-structured interviews an e-mail was sent to eight head teachers ranking the highest in the trust measurements, asking if they were prepared to give an interview. Three offered to take part in the interview section and were interviewed. Data was received from the job satisfaction survey through Reykjavík´s Human Resource department after the Department of Education and Youth recommended an access to be granted. All the data from the job satisfaction survey and the researcher´s questionnaire is coded, using numbers instead of real school names, to ensure anonymity.

3.3. Research design, instruments and analysis

The research is based on literature review, data collected through a questionnaire, semi-structured interviews and data received from Reykjavík municipality´s Human Resource department from a job satisfaction survey carried out by the department. The scoping period started last year with a visit to the Jubilee Centre for Character and Virtues at the University of Birmingham and discussions with experts in the field of virtues and character strengths. The co-operation with the Reykjavík municipality Human Resource Department is significant and valuable for the research. So is the participation of the head teachers and encouragement and support from the Department of Education and Youth. The whole population is the sample in the
research, omitting the hazard of sampling errors or selection biases (Bryman, 2015, May, 2011).

3.3.1. Data from Reykjavík job satisfaction survey

Every other year all employed staff of the municipality of Reykjavík take part in a job satisfaction survey. In Iceland, the compulsory schools, as well as preschools, are governed by municipalities and therefore all school staff in Reykjavík take part in the surveys. The survey is designed and developed by the Reykjavík Human Resource Department and uses five-point Likert scale with the responses given as; (1) strongly disagree, (2) disagree, (3) neutral, (4) agree, and (5) strongly agree. The survey’s main objectives are to improve human resources and ensure quality work environment in Reykjavík’s organisations (Reykjavíkurborg - Mannauðsdeild, 2015). The survey is an extensive job satisfaction survey where employers rate 64 statements in 17 categories on a Likert scale. The statements are on various aspects of the job environment, satisfaction and conditions and in addition there are some background questions and open questions. For the purpose of this research an access has been granted for the data from all the 36 compulsory schools on statements in the category of attitudes towards leadership and management. The category consists of the four following statements:

1. I trust my head teacher

2. I am satisfied with the communications with my head teacher

3. My head teacher settles disputes that arise in the school

4. I receive encouragement from my head teacher
The dataset used, consists of 1,356 responses from staff in all the 36 schools. The survey took place in March and April 2017 and the response rate was 71%.

The main statement used to measure trust in a workplace is the first one; *I trust my head teacher*. It will be used to compare with the head teachers’ self-reported honesty. The data was received coded in SPSS. To validate the reliability of the scale a Cronbach’s Alpha test, including all the four variables/statements, was used. Since the data is an ordinal type data, a frequency of positive answers will be used to determine and analyse trust. There are various ways to summarise Likert scale data in a univariate analysis, and an ongoing academic discussion is evolving around the issue. However, using frequency and report it using percentages is considered to be the most transparent way (Black, 1999). The data will be transformed into continuous data by using the frequency of positive answers to estimate the level of trust. An example of this is an imaginary school where the level of trust is measured 60% because 20% of the staff disagree or disagree strongly to the statement *I trust my head teacher*, 20% of the staff are neutral and 60% agree or agree strongly.

### 3.3.2. The questionnaire

All 36 head teachers in compulsory schools in Reykjavík received a link to an online questionnaire 26th of April 2017. The questionnaire consists of five sections (see Appendix A):

1. Demographic questions. Since the researcher knows most of the participants personally and regards it important to secure anonymity in data collection, only
two demographic questions were asked about age and time of tenure as a head teacher.

2. Respondents´ view of their own character strengths, where they are asked to identify from a list of 24 character strengths, derived from the Values in Action (VIA) inventory, the six character strengths that best describe them and rank them in order.

3. Self-reported honesty, where participants respond to five statements from the Values in Action inventory about honesty on a five point Likert scale. An example of statements is: 1) *I always keep my promises*, 2) *I believe honesty is the basis for trust* and 3) *I always stand up for my beliefs*.

4. Respondents´ view of which six character strengths best describe the ideal head teacher, where they are asked to identify from the same list of 24 character strengths as in section one and rank the six most important ones in order.

5. Respondents´ view on their work environment. In this section, some questions were adapted from the Europe-wide workplace survey (European Foundation, 2012) and some derive from the Reykjavík job satisfaction.

Before the questionnaire was used, a pilot group of 5 head teachers and deputy head teachers in other municipalities than Reykjavík tested it and made some very helpful comments used to finalise the questionnaire.
3.3.3. The interviews

Since the aim of this research is to identify whether ideas about honesty in leadership affect trust in schools, a set of questions was devised for semi-structured interviews with participants from schools where trust is measured the highest in the job satisfaction survey. The eight schools, where trust was measured the highest, were selected and head teachers asked to indicate if they were willing to participate in the interview section. The aim was to interview 3-4 head teachers. Three head teachers offered their participation and they were interviewed.

The semi-structured interviews are considered to be a method of triangulation in gathering data of head teachers’ attitude towards honesty in leadership and ways to build up and sustain trust in schools as well as their ideas about the importance of trust in schools. Semi-structured interviews have the advantage of being able to generate data in a more efficient manner than observations or questionnaires. The researcher is able to gather more detailed information and probe the participants’ responses to clarify his or her meaning (Hobson and Townsend, 2010). Like Lichtman (2012) argues, it is important to keep appropriate distance between the researcher and the interviewee to assure the information gathered will not get skewed or distorted. Since the researcher in this study knows the participants personally it is even more important to be aware of this issue. It is also important, when using semi-structured interviews, to ensure there is a mutual trust between the researcher and the interviewee. The interviewee has to be able to trust that the information gathered will be used in a respectful manner and the researcher has to be able to trust that the information given by the interviewee is a correct description but not a bias, beautified description or a
belief (Yin, 2011). The interviews are kept in a single copy and will be erased within one year.

3.3.4. Data analysis

SPSS, version 24 statistical software package, was used to analyse the quantitative data. Frequency and percentage distribution values were calculated for trust in school measurements and the four statements from the job satisfaction survey were checked for internal consistency reliability by running Cronbach’s alpha coefficient tests. Even if all the four statements/variables are used to estimate the reliability of the data and in the descriptive analysis of trust in schools in Reykjavík, only the first statement/variable; I trust my head teacher, is checked for correlation with the self-reported honesty measurement. As for the questionnaire, the five statements in section 3 were checked for reliability and four statements used to make a new scale to test the correlation with measured trust in schools. Spearman’s rho correlation test was used since the data is partly ordinal, not normally distributed and includes several outliers (Black, 1999, May, 2011). Information from the other four sections of the questionnaire will be used to describe head teachers’ attitude towards honesty and if they consider themselves honest. Furthermore, data from the fifth section of the questionnaire will be used to examine if there is a tendency of certain attitudes towards the head teachers’ work and workplace in accordance with measured trust. The three interviews will be used to triangulate that data and deepen the information from the questionnaire and job satisfaction survey. The interviews took place distantly through Skype. They were recorded to ensure accuracy and then transcribed and analysed.

3.4. Limitations

Honesty and trust are complex phenomena and understanding of them is related to certain organisational, personal and social context at a given moment in time. That is obviously a limitation. It is impossible with such a high number of participants to ensure common understanding of the ideas. The head teachers were introduced to the Values in Action classification of character strengths one week before they received the questionnaire and this issue was further challenged by using interviews as a triangulation of methods.

Self-reporting questionnaires have been regarded as a limitation when researching character strengths. It is subject to self-deception biases, social-desirability biases and self-confirmation biases (Black, 1999; May, 2011). Since the aim of this research is to find out if character strengths, as self-reported by head teachers, correlate to trust as experienced by staff it basically addresses this self-reporting biases consideration. There is still one issue worth mentioning, called ‘demand characteristics’, where participants try to work out the aim of the study and answer in accordance to that (Black, 1999; May, 2011; Carr et al., 2015). To try to prevent that from happening it is important to note that when the research was introduced to the participants it was not mentioned that honesty and trust were the subjects of the study but only that the study was generally on character strengths in leadership.
3.5. Translations

The participants are obviously Icelandic but the research is in English. Translations have been made by the researcher himself, but proved by colleagues participating in a support group and to some extent participants in a piloting process. Translations had to be made on the following components of the research:

1. The job satisfaction survey.

Data was received in Icelandic and translated into English. The translation only includes the four statements used from the surveys and the Likert-scale.

2. The questionnaire.

The questionnaire is mainly based on the Values in Action inventory in English. It was put together in English, translated into Icelandic and then the data was linked back to the original English version. In the pilot testing, participants had access to the Icelandic and English versions, side by side, and were asked to compare and comment on the translations. Some valuable comments were made and taken into account.

3. The interviews.

Questions for the interviews were constructed in Icelandic and the interviews were executed in Icelandic. The interviews were then transcribed and coded in Icelandic and only the quotes translated into English.

3.6. Ethical considerations

The research has been granted ethical approval by the Centre for Education Studies at the University of Warwick (see: Appendix B). The subjects in the questionnaire
section of the research are head teachers in Reykjavík but the researcher is also a head teacher in Reykjavík on a one-year sabbatical. Since all the participants are colleagues of the researcher special measures have been made to ensure anonymity. The questionnaire was submitted electronically and anonymously. It was important for the research to ask for age and tenure as a head teacher but no other background questions were included in the questionnaire. To ensure anonymity all participants received a code from Reykjavík Human Resource department and are referred to by that code during the process of data collection, analysis and reporting. Since the researcher has to be able to link data from the questionnaire and the job satisfaction survey, Reykjavík’s Human Resource department coded the job satisfaction survey with the same codes as used in the questionnaire. Anonymity of the interviewees is ensured by using pseudo names. The questionnaire was on an online portal which provided additional confidentiality as data was received electrically and gathered automatically on a spreadsheet using Qualtrics survey platform, provided by the University of Warwick IT department. All participants had to clearly confirm their consent in the questionnaire and comprehensive consent forms were signed by participants in the interviews (see: Appendix C).
4. Findings

To be able to explore if there is a correlation between measured trust in compulsory schools in Reykjavík and head teachers’ self-reported honesty, trust in schools will firstly be examined, then head teachers’ ranking of important character strengths in leadership and self-reported honesty before the correlation will be tested. In the last section of this chapter key findings will be presented, after the relationship between trust and head teachers’ view on their working environment will be explored.

4.1. Trust in compulsory schools in Reykjavík

Reykjavík Human Resource department performs job satisfaction surveys every other year. Results from 2015 are available on Reykjavík’s web (Reykjavíkurborg - Mannauðsdeild, 2015) but this year’s results (the data used in this research) have not been published yet. Using Reykjavík’s methods to calculate factor score for each statement, where a Likert scale score is converted into a factor score from 0 to 10, it is possible to compare trust as measured by Reykjavík Human Resource department between the two years. There are different methods available to convert Likert scale data into factor scores but the method used by Reykjavík Human Resource department is to convert each data point using the equation; \((x-1)/4*10\), and then calculate the mean for the whole data set. It means that the five point Likert scale is converted where 1 = 0; 2 = 2.5; 3 = 5; 4 = 7.5; and 5 = 10. Using this method gives the mean factor score 7.8 for the statement I trust my head teacher in the 36 schools for the year 2017 but it was 7.7 in 2015. Therefore, there is a minimum increase of trust in schools in Reykjavík but trust is still lower than the whole average for all organisations of the Reykjavík municipality in 2015, which was 8.0. According to this, it can be stated that trust in schools in Reykjavík is slightly lower than average was in 2015 in Reykjavík’s
organisations and is marginally higher than two years ago. The distribution of the data for each school is rather high or from 5.1 to 9.5 with standard deviation of 1.24. Reykjavík Human Resource Department gives the rule of thumb that score under 6 is low and inadequate, score from 6 to 8 is adequate but should improve and score from 8 and over is high and effective (Reykjavíkurberg - Mannauðsdeild, 2015).

Figure 1: Trust in compulsory schools in Reykjavík as measured in a job satisfaction survey in March and April 2017.

*The x-axis shows the percentage of respondents in each school answering the statement, on a Likeret scale, and the y-axis shows each school where the given code is used.*
In this research frequency data for agree and strongly agree to the statement *I trust my head teacher* is used to measure trust in schools. As can be seen in Figure 1 trust varies from around 40% of participants selecting agree or strongly agree when asked if they trust their head teacher, up to 100% in two instances. In 10 schools nobody disagrees or strongly disagrees to the statement but the highest disagreement rate is in school 532 where almost 35% disagree or strongly disagree to the statement and the bigger portion, by far, strongly disagrees.

Trust in compulsory schools in Reykjavík is measured using results from the statement *I trust my head teacher*. There are three other statements in the survey’s category of management and leadership and they were used to test the reliability of the measurement using Cronbach’s alpha test. The results were that the reliability was very high or .914 using the four questions where 1,258 answers were regarded valid and 71 excluded. The correlation between the statement *I trust my head teacher* and the other three questions in the category can be seen in Figure 2. In the current study only the statement, *I trust my head teacher* will be used to measure trust in the 36 schools and test correlation with self-reported honesty.
Figure 2: Correlation between the statement I trust my head teacher and other statements in the category. The x-axis shows each school where the given code is used and the y-axis shows the percentage of respondents in each school answering the four statements, on a Likert scale, with; I agree or I strongly agree.

4.1.1. Examples of head teachers’ attitudes through the interviews

The three head teachers offering to participate in the interviews were all males and were given the pseudo names Aron, Alexander and Viktor, those being the three most common names given to new-born boys in Iceland, the year 2016. The head teachers all come from schools measured high in trust in the job satisfaction survey. The interviews were coded thematically using Hoy’s and Tschannen-Moran’s (1999) ideas of the five preconditions for trust (benevolence, reliability, competence, honesty and openness). Interestingly all interviewees named at least one idea of how and why trust emerges for each of the thematic groups and only one idea (ambition), named by one
interviewee, does not fall within the five theme categories. It must still be mentioned that one interviewee said he recently read some of Hoy’s and Tschannen-Moran’s work and another attended a presentation given by Tschannen-Moran earlier this year.

Most responses fell within the theme of benevolence and all interviewees mentioned that a head teacher has to be able to work with different individuals and take their personal circumstances into account:

*The head teacher needs to work with the staff he/she has. He/she has to be aware of that people are different; with different strengths but also different backgrounds. Even if you want to separate between your professional and personal life, teachers cannot leave their personal issues at home. ... Teachers need to know that they can always seek for advice and support to the head teacher. In that respect it is important that they are certain that when they seek for advice from the head teacher they receive guidance and support rather than ignorance or sanction. The head teacher should aim to build bridges between himself and his staff but not ditches.*

*Alexander*

Viktor mentioned that the head teacher needs to believe in his staff and have positive expectations towards their abilities. Aron agreed to that and added the importance of taking the time to listen to the staff, whether the issue is professional or personal.

Counting comments in each theme category has probably no meaning to the importance of the category. Even if the fewest comments fell within the theme category of reliability it does not necessarily mean the head teachers considred that precondition for trust to be the least important. According to the interviewees, head
teachers need to be consistent to build up and sustain trust and Viktor said that the head teacher has to fulfil the staff’s expectations to his or her own competence and not let the employers down, but at the same time still be true to his or her own beliefs.

All three head teachers claimed that competence is a crucial issue and all made more than one comment of its importance. Nevertheless, none of them named lack of competence as a cause for distrust. Alexander stressed the importance of the head teacher as a professional leader with skills and competence greater than the staff and Viktor commented that the head teacher has to be able to walk the walk as well as to talk the talk and to be able to always make the best decision. Aron described competence in a wider perspective:

*The head teacher needs to have various skills. He/she certainly needs to have a vision for his/her school and the ability to perform towards that vision but he/she also needs to be able to support the staff in different ways. The head teacher is not only an educational leader or a visionary but also a psychologist, an accountant, a human resource manager and a negotiator, to name but few roles he/she has to play. Schools are complex organisations and the head teacher has to be able to perform different roles in different surroundings. It is not enough to be a qualified educator. The head teacher has to solve many different issues and he/she has to exhibit that he/she is qualified.*

_Aron_

According to the three head teachers it demands a fine balance of skills, character and behaviour to build up and sustain trust. Even if competence is important and head
teachers need to exhibit capability to lead and make decisions they also claimed that head teachers need to practice open communications with their subordinates and listen to their views. Aron said that the head teacher needs to be willing to connect with people and trust his staff and ensure that communications amongst staff is constructive. Alexander claimed that the head teacher has to be frank and open in communications and furthermore that the staff needs to know where he or she stands in different matters. Viktor agreed with that but added the notion that the head teacher takes the teachers’ view into account when making decisions.

Out of nine comments about honesty, Alexander made six, Aron two and Viktor only one. What identifies the comments that fell within the theme of honesty is the usage of that term. When talking about competence or reliability, the interviewees did not really use those terms but honesty was used as a term in five of the nine comments. In the Values in Action questionnaire used to estimate self-reported honesty the five statements are:

1. I always keep my promises
2. I never hesitate to publicly express an unpopular opinion
3. I believe honesty is the basis for trust
4. I am always true to my own values
5. Others trust me to keep their secrets

In their comments coded within the theme of honesty the head teachers mentioned ideas covering all the statements above except the last one. None of them said that head teachers need to be a person others could ask to keep their secrets. However, Alexander mentioned that the head teacher needs to be trustworthy, cannot betray his/her employers or go behind their backs. He claimed the head teacher has to be true
to his/her values and beliefs and be consistent in his/her leadership. Alexander used honesty as well as authenticity in his replies. Aron emphasised consistency and honest relationships where the head teacher tells his/her employers the things like they are in a respectful manner while Viktor only stated that honesty is a fundamental issue for trust. When asked about how they would define honesty Viktor and Aron said it is a feeling difficult to explain with words but Alexander used words like trustworthy, authenticity and not to betray others.

When the three head teachers were asked if they could name some examples of how they practice honesty in their leadership, they all mentioned that honesty is perhaps hard to conceptualise in examples. Viktor claimed that he is perhaps not very conscious about when he behaves honestly in his leadership. Alexander said he tries to speak directly and express high expectations to his staff. According to him the staff needs to be well aware of what the purpose of their job is. He also stated that he is decided in generally trusting his staff. Aron mentioned an incident where he had to be true to his own values and go against one teacher’s interest in a dispute between the teacher and parents. He stated that such incidents are always demanding but when faced by them it is important for him as the head teacher to have clear values and base his decisions on them.

4.2. Ranking of honesty and other character strengths in leadership

According to the interviews, the three head teachers, all from schools high in trust, considered honesty important in their school leadership. Data from the questionnaire where head teachers were asked what character strengths they consider most important
for head teachers to behold confirms that belief. Leadership, social intelligence, honesty and teamwork were the character strengths named by more than 60% of the participants, who were 24 out of all 36 head teachers in Reykjavík. As can be seen in Figure 3 leadership and social intelligence were most often named, or by 75% of the participants, and 29% of all participants put leadership in the first place. Since the question is what character strengths are most important for the ideal head teacher or a school leader, the findings do not have to come as a surprise. Honesty is ranked third where 4% of the participants put it in the first place as the most important character strength, 25% in the second place, 21% in the third place and 16% combined in fourth, fifth and sixth place. All together 66% of the participants named honesty as one of the six most important character strengths for the ideal head teacher.

Figure 3: Ranked character strengths for the ideal head teacher.
*The legends 6, 5, 4, 3, 2, 1 stand for the importance of each character strength where 1 is considered to be the most important, 2 the second most important and so on.*
When it comes to evaluating or ranking their own character strengths the results are interestingly similar. The same four character strengths are at the top and the same four at the bottom, but in a different order as can be seen in Figure 4. Most of the head teachers consider honesty to best describe their own character strength, or 75%. Next is social intelligence with 71%, but 25% of the participants name social intelligence as number one in the ranking. The 24 head teachers name all of the 24 character strengths except four (appreciation of beauty, hope, love, spirituality). Eleven of the 24 character strengths are put on the top of the list as the most important character strength, 6 of them only by any one participant but the other 5 by 2 to 8 participants. Five of the highest ranked character strengths are selected by 50% of the participants or more, the next 4 by third of the participants but others by a lower percentage.

![Figure 4: Ranking of the head teachers’ own character strengths.](image)

*The legends 6, 5, 4, 3, 2, 1 stand for the importance of each character strength where 1 is considered to be the most important, 2 the second most important and so on.*
Comparison between head teachers ranking of character strengths for the ideal head teacher and their own, shows that some head teachers consider themselves honest but do not regard that character strength as one of the six most important for head teachers as can be seen in Figure 5. On the contrary 75% of the head teachers consider leadership to be one of the six most important character strengths for the ideal head teacher but only 54% consider leadership to be one of the six most important character strengths they possess. The biggest difference in the two top six lists is that 50% of the head teachers consider judgement one of the six most important character strengths for the ideal head teacher but for their own character strength ranking, judgement is in 10th place with only 28% considering it as one of their six most prominent ones. On the other hand the same percentage, or 33% of the head teachers, consider kindness to be one of their most important character strengths and one of the most important for the ideal head teacher. Nevertheless, kindness does not make it into the top six character strengths for the ideal head teacher because of the way answers were distributed between the character strengths.

Figure 5: Comparison of ranked character strengths for the ideal head teacher and own character strength.
In the questionnaire, the head teachers are asked to indicate their age and time in tenure as head teachers. According to Park, Peterson and Seligman (2006) there is a slight demographic difference in self-reported character strength by age and gender, for example. Before analysing both backgrounds a Spearman’s rho correlation test was made on both of the background groups and since the correlation was .58 with .003 significance, only the age background is used to describe the tendency. The group of 24 head teachers consists of 5 between 40 and 49 years old, 11 between 50 and 59 years old and 8 between 60 and 69 years old.

As shown in Figure 6 all age groups consider the four top character strengths to some extent as one of their character strengths. The most noticeable difference amongst the four is that all 60-69 years old head teachers regard teamwork as one of their six strongest character strengths but only 38% of the 40-49 years old, with the middle group of 50-59 years old being in the middle with 73%. Amongst the two older year groups around 80% consider honesty one of their six most important character strength but only 63% of the participants in the youngest age group. Apart from the four top character strengths there seems to be no consent about the other two on the top six list. Participants in the group of 60 to 69 years name bravery and modesty, participants in the 50 to 59 years group name fairness and self-regulation and participants in the 40 to 49 years group name judgement and humour.
Figure 6: Ranked own character strengths by age groups.

4.3. Self-reported honesty

In the third section of the questionnaire, participants are asked to rate five statements from the Values in Action questionnaire about honesty. Since a new scale is made out of the statements in the section, a Cronbach’s Alpha test was run to examine the reliability of the measurement. The results were that the reliability was .695, using the five statements. Even if results above .5 is acceptable with less than 10 items the aim was to measure reliability above 0.7 (Bryman, 2015). When looking at individual items or statements the results are that reliability would be .707 if item three (I believe honesty is the basis for trust) was deleted as seen in Table 3. Therefore, it was decided to exclude that item from the scale and include only the four following statements:

- I always keep my promises
• *I never hesitate to publicly express an unpopular opinion*

• *I am always true to my own values*

• *Others trust me to keep their secrets*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item-Total Statistics</th>
<th>Scale Mean if Item Deleted</th>
<th>Scale Variance if Item Deleted</th>
<th>Corrected Item-Total Correlation</th>
<th>Cronbach’s Alpha if Item Deleted</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I always keep my promises</td>
<td>16.33</td>
<td>3.275</td>
<td>.567</td>
<td>.603</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I never hesitate to publicly express an unpopular opinion</td>
<td>17.46</td>
<td>2.172</td>
<td>.624</td>
<td>.569</td>
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<tr>
<td>I believe honesty is the basis for trust</td>
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<td>4.000</td>
<td>.271</td>
<td>.707</td>
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<tr>
<td>I am always true to my own values</td>
<td>16.54</td>
<td>3.389</td>
<td>.545</td>
<td>.616</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others trust me to keep their secrets</td>
<td>16.33</td>
<td>3.536</td>
<td>.339</td>
<td>.690</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3: Item-total statistics for the self-reported honesty scale.

The four statements used for the self-reported honesty scale were all answered on a 5 points Likert scale. As can be seen in table 4 the mean is relatively high and standard deviation low, which means that there is low distribution amongst the answers and the score tends to be high. The only exception from this is question 2; *I never hesitate to publicly express an unpopular opinion.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item Statistics</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Dev.</th>
<th>N</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I always keep my promises</td>
<td>4.33</td>
<td>.565</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>I never hesitate to publicly express an unpopular opinion</td>
<td>3.21</td>
<td>.932</td>
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<tr>
<td>I am always true to my own values</td>
<td>4.13</td>
<td>.537</td>
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<tr>
<td>Others trust me to keep their secrets</td>
<td>4.33</td>
<td>.637</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4: Statistics for the four questions used for the self-reported honesty scale.

The scale made from the four questions is a percentage scale where all four questions are combined and a percentage calculated where 100% equals a score of 20 which is the highest possible score. By using this method, the 24 head teachers’ score is
distributed from 55% to 95%. Just as when distribution is investigated amongst individual questions, as in Table 4, it is evident by the combined self-reported honesty score that the distribution is low and the score is high. The mean is 80% and standard deviation 10%. Figure 7 shows how the combined scale is made up and how the distribution is amongst the 24 head teachers.

Figure 7: Combined scale for self-reported honesty. The x-axis shows each school where the given code is used, the primary y-axis (to the left) shows added up Likert scale score, and the secondary y-axis (to the right) shows the added up Likert score converted into percentage.

4.4. Correlation between measured trust and self-reported honesty

To analyse if there is a correlation between measured trust and self-reported honesty, a Spearman’s rho correlation test is used. Data has been gained for trust (M = 78.9%,
SD = 16.4%) in all 36 compulsory schools in Reykjavík and 24 head teachers were surveyed about their self-reported honesty (M = 80%, SD = 10%). Only data about trust from the 24 schools where head teachers answered was used to measure correlation (M = 83.4%, SD = 14.6%). A Spearman’s rho data analysis revealed a weak negative correlation coefficient of -.214, with a significance at .316. Therefore, the result is that there is not a significant correlation between measured trust and self-reported honesty in compulsory schools in Reykjavík. The H₀;ρ = 0 hypothesis; There is not a significant correlation between the head teacher’s self-reported honesty and trust in the school was confirmed but the H₁;ρ ≠ 0 hypothesis; There is a significant correlation between the head teacher’s self-reported honesty and trust in the school was rejected. The correlation is well described in a scatterplot in Figure 8. What the scatter plot shows is that there is a weak trend between measured trust and self-reported honesty and that it is negative. There are a few extreme cases participating decisively to the trend (529, 532, 205) but even if excluded there is not a significant correlation (r(19) = -.014, p = .967). It is also evident in the data that it is deficiently distributed since honesty is measured very high with a rather low standard deviation. Even if data on trust would not be as concentrated it is still high with a low standard deviation.
Figure 8: Scatter plot of measured trust and self-reported honesty.

It is interesting to run a Spearman’s rho correlation test for individual questions from the scale for self-reported honesty, even if it has been tested for validity. Results from that test can be seen in Table 5. According to the results presented in the table there is a significant negative correlation (at the level of .05) between measured trust and the statement; *I am always true to my own values*, but it is negative (*r*(22) = -.456, *p* = .025). There is no significant correlation between measured trust and any other individual questions from the self-reported honesty scale.
Spearman’s rho correlations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>Trust</th>
<th>I always keep my promises</th>
<th>I never hesitate to publicly express an unpopular opinion</th>
<th>I am always true to my own values</th>
<th>Others trust me to keep their secrets</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
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<td>-.196</td>
<td>-.456*</td>
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<td>24</td>
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<tr>
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<td>.386</td>
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<tr>
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<td>.041</td>
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<td>24</td>
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<td>24</td>
</tr>
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<td>.398</td>
<td>1.000</td>
<td>.630**</td>
<td>.329</td>
</tr>
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<td><strong>Sig. (2-tailed)</strong></td>
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<td>.</td>
<td>.001</td>
<td>.117</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>N</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Correlation</strong></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5: Spearman´s rho correlation test results when comparing measured trust and individual questions from the self-reported honesty test

In Figure 9 results from the trust measurement are presented along with results from the self-reported honesty and own character ranking for honesty. Included in the graph are all 36 schools and they are ranked according to outcome from the trust measurement. That means that the schools where trust is lowest are furthest to the left but schools where trust was measured highest are to the right. It is evident from this presentation that there is no correlation. Most striking are schools 529 and 532 where trust is measured very low but head teachers´ self-reported honesty is high and school 205 where trust is measured 100% but the head teacher values his or her honesty the
lowest of all participants. The other school where trust is measured 100% is school 501 where self-reported honesty is also low. The secondary axis on the graph, ranging from 0 to 6 indicates if or how prominent the head teachers consider honesty to be amongst their character strengths. If head teachers consider honesty to be their most important character strength it gets the value 6, if it is the second most important it gets the value 5 and so on. There seems to be no alignment with that data and measured trust or self-reported honesty. Eighteen of the 24 head teachers consider honesty as one of their six most important character strengths. Amongst the 8 head teachers in the lowest third in the trust measurement all but 3 name honesty as one of their most important character strengths, all but one in the middle third and all but two in the highest third.

Figure 9: Measured trust in schools, self-reported honesty and honesty ranked as an own important character strength.

The x-axis shows each school where the given code is used. The primary y-axis (to the left) shows the percentage score and referers to the trust measurement and honesty self-reporting. The secondary y-axis (to the right) shows how important head teachers consider honesty to be amongst their character strengths where 6 is the most important, 5 is the second most important and so on.
Figure 9 also contains information on head teachers’ participation in the honesty questionnaire. The trust measurement is from all 36 compulsory schools in Reykjavík and in the graph they are ranked according to measured trust in the recent job satisfaction survey. Only four of the 12 head teachers in the lowest third part of the schools, according to the trust measurement, answered the questionnaire sent to them but all but 2 of the highest third did. Similarly, from the middle third all but 2 answered the questionnaire.

4.5. Links between trust and head teachers´ view on their work environment

The last section of the head teachers´ questionnaire consisted of statements about head teachers´ view on their work environment. The purpose of the section was to evaluate if there are certain feelings or attitudes that characterise head teachers in schools in relation with trust. By running a Spearman’s rho correlation test the findings are that there is not a significant correlation between measured trust and head teachers´ view on their work environment, using the 6 statements presented in Table 6.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Correlation Coefficient</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
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<td>-0.175</td>
<td>-0.131</td>
<td>0.311</td>
<td>-0.371</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
<td>0.385</td>
<td>0.413</td>
<td>0.543</td>
<td>0.139</td>
<td>0.074</td>
<td>0.731</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>24</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am motivated to work to the best of my ability</td>
<td>-0.186</td>
<td>1.000</td>
<td>0.148</td>
<td>0.026</td>
<td>-0.319</td>
<td>0.103</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
<td>0.385</td>
<td>0.489</td>
<td>0.902</td>
<td>0.129</td>
<td>0.630</td>
<td>0.419</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>24</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am able to apply my own ideas in my work</td>
<td>-0.175</td>
<td>0.148</td>
<td>1.000</td>
<td>-0.070</td>
<td>-0.158</td>
<td>0.381</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
<td>0.413</td>
<td>0.489</td>
<td>0.745</td>
<td>0.462</td>
<td>0.066</td>
<td>0.038</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>24</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*It is difficult to do the right thing at work
An example of the head teachers’ responses can be seen in Figure 10. On a 5 point Likert scale, all head teachers answer I agree (4) or I strongly agree (5) when asked if they feel at home in their school (M = 4.3, SD = 0.46). Six or half of the head teachers in the lower half of the trust ranking answer the question with I strongly agree but only one in the higher half.

Figure 10: Measured trust and head teachers’ responses to the question; I feel at home in my school.

The x-axis shows each school where the given code is used, the primary y-axis (to the left) shows percentage and refers to the trust measurement, while the secondary y-axis (to the right) is a Likert scale score for the statement I feel at home in my school.
In addition to the statements about head teachers’ view on their working environment there was also a statement where head teachers were asked to indicate to what extent they consider the staff trusted them. Again a 5 points Likert scale was used and again all responses are I agree or I strongly agree (M = 4.4, SD = 0.5). It is indeed difficult to measure correlation when the data is so condensed and there was not a significant correlation between measured trust and head teachers’ responses to the statement *I experience that my employees trust me* ($r(22) = .367, p = .078$).

![Staff and head teacher experience of trust](image)

**Figure 11**: Measured trust and head teachers’ responses to the statement; *I experience that my employees trust me*. The x-axis shows each school where the given code is used, the primary y-axis (to the left) shows percentage and refers to the trust measurement, while the secondary y-axis (to the right) is a Likert scale score for the statement; *I experience that my employees trust me*.

### 4.6. Key findings

- Trust in compulsory schools in Reykjavík is measured marginally higher in a recent job satisfaction survey than it was two years ago but is still lower than the average score for all organisations within the Reykjavík municipality.
When data from the survey on how many answered the statement *I trust my head teacher* by indicating I agree or I strongly agree is explored, the results are that from 1329 participants in 36 schools the mean score is 78.9% with standard deviation of 16.4%. The score varies from 40% up to 100%.

- Head teachers from schools where trust is measured high, interviewed about trust and honesty, seem to agree with academic ideas about how to build up and sustain trust. Furthermore, they identify ideas about honesty as presented in the Values in Action inventory.

- Head teachers in Reykjavík regard leadership, social intelligence, honesty, teamwork, judgement and fairness as the most important character strengths for the ideal head teacher.

- Head teachers in Reykjavík consider their own most important character strengths to be honesty, social intelligence, teamwork, leadership, fairness and kindness.

- Data on self-reported honesty indicates that head teachers generally consider themselves to be honest. When Likert-scale answers from 4 questions from the Values in Action inventory are converted into a percentage scale the mean outcome is 80% with the standard deviation of 10%.
• Using a Spearman’s rho correlation test there did not turn out to be a significant correlation between measured trust in schools in Reykjavík and head teachers’ self-reported honesty.

• There is not a significant correlation between measured trust in schools and head teachers´ attitudes towards their work environment. Furthermore, there is not a correlation between measured trust and head teachers’ own ideas of level of trust in their schools.
5. Discussion

The intent of the present study is to explore if there is a significant correlation between trust in schools as measured in job satisfaction surveys and head teachers’ self-reported honesty. Measured trust in compulsory schools in Reykjavík has been examined as well as findings about self-reported honesty amongst head teachers in Reykjavík and their ideas of the importance of honesty in school leadership. According to the findings in the literature review, presented above, there is a strong correlation between trust in schools and teachers’ and students’ performance and furthermore that honesty is regarded an important precondition for trust. When recruiting head teachers, capable of building up and sustaining trust, it must be important to try somehow to evaluate their honesty.

5.1. Addressing the research questions

Trust in compulsory schools in Reykjavík is measured just below average for all organisations in the Reykjavík municipality. As argued by Bryk and Schneider (2003), Luis (2007) and Goddard (2003), trust has a significant effect on students’ achievements and should therefore be regarded as an essential issue for schools. In Bryk and Schneider’s (2003) research evidence was found of regression in students’ academic performance in schools where level of trust was low. According to the Reykjavík Human Resource Department (Reykjavíkurborg - Mannauðsdeild, 2015) four of the 36 schools show level of low trust, 11 level of adequate trust but need for improvement and 21 level of high trust. The educational authorities in Reykjavík should aim to improve trust in the schools where it seems to be lacking. According to
the literature there are many preconditions for trust, honesty being one of them. To be able to guide the head teachers where trust is insufficient it is important to estimate what is lacking or what is wrong in the leadership or the leaders’ behaviour.

In the interviews the three head teachers, all from schools high in trust, emphasised the importance of honesty in leadership but also discussed other preconditions of trust. Other head teachers in Reykjavík seem to share that view since 67% of them rank honesty as one of the six most important character strengths for the ideal head teacher or, more precisely, the third most important character strength. When asked what character strengths best describe them as leaders, honesty is most often mentioned as one of the six most important character strengths. That result goes in line with Money, Hillenbrand and Da Camara’s (2009) findings that managers tend to rank honesty as their most prominent character strength and furthermore consider honesty as a character strength that it is required in their workplace. There are similar results from research amongst different professions in the UK performed by the Jubilee Centre for Character at Birmingham University and in a multinational research where Values in Action inventory scores from over 100,000 respondents from 54 nations were examined. In all instances, honesty scored high and was amongst the three highest self-reported character strengths (see: Carr et al., 2015; Arthur et al., 2014; Kotzee et al., 2014; Park, Peterson and Seligman, 2006). It is questionable to use those findings to conclude that honesty is generally people’s strongest character strength. Since the method of evaluation is self-reporting it is possible to assess that this creates a contradiction and claim that honest people respond honestly but dishonest people do not necessarily do so. Scholars have argued that self-reporting character strength tests
are subject to self-deception biases, social-desirability biases, and self-confirmation biases, as discussed below.

Research has shown that honesty is one precondition for trust but also that there is no tried and tested method to measure honesty. Scholars have argued the importance of comparing results from self-reporting tests with measurements of actual behaviour. In this current research, questions from the Values in Actions inventory were used to estimate honesty with self-reporting questionnaire. Out of the 36 head teachers in Reykjavik, 24 head teachers participated by answering a questionnaire exploring their ideas about honesty in leadership and self-reporting on their own honesty. The following hypotheses were put forth:

- \( H_0: \rho = 0 \)

There is not a significant correlation between the head teacher’s self-reported honesty and trust in the school.

- \( H_a: \rho \neq 0 \)

There is a significant correlation between the head teacher’s self-reported honesty and trust in the school.

The result was that there is not a significant correlation between head teachers’ self-reported honesty and measured trust. That does not mean that honesty is not an important precondition for trust. There can be many other factors affecting the result. The following 3 factors have been identified for special discussion:

- Tendencies in self-reporting honesty
- Lack of distribution in the data
- Inconsistency in understanding of concepts
5.1.1. Tendencies in self-reporting honesty

When measuring character strengths, using the Values in Action questionnaire, research has shown that honesty is usually ranked the highest amongst character strengths (see: Carr et al., 2015; Arthur et al., 2014; Kotzee et al., 2014; Money, Hillenbrand and Da Camara, 2009; and Park, Peterson and Seligman, 2006). That indicates that people generally consider or like to consider themselves honest. As stated above there are certain hazards or limitations involved in using self-reporting data, especially when researching people’s character strengths. Data may be affected by; self-deception biases, where participants consider themselves different from how they are in practice; social-desirability biases, where participants answer question in a way they think will be acceptable by others; and self-confirmation biases, where participants respond in a way which confirms their beliefs rather than building their response on information that might contradict their beliefs (Black, 1999; May, 2011; Bryman, 2015). It is possible that some of the biases mentioned above have affected the head teachers’ responses. Results from the comparison of trust and head teachers’ experience of trust, as shown in Figure 11, might support that idea but nothing can be asserted without further research. As argued by Park and Peterson (2006) honesty will in the end by measured by how people act in certain circumstances rather than how they think about the concept.

5.1.2. Lack of distribution in the data

Correlation analysis demands certain amount of distribution in the data. The better the data is distributed the better it is for correlation analysis. As shown in Figure 9, only 5 head teachers from the 15 low or adequate level schools took part in the questionnaire whereas 18 of the 21 high level schools participated. That fact does not
only leave some space for speculations about the leaders from the lower level schools in general, but more importantly diminishes the distribution in the trust measurement data. The largest portion of the data is from schools high in trust. Adding to that is the fact that self-reported honesty tends to result in high scores with little distribution as demonstrated by Money, Hillenbrand and Da Camara (2009) and Park, Peterson and Seligman (2006) and further in this current study. As presented in the scatter plot in Figure 8, the data is rather condensed towards the highest point of the measurements, with few exceptions.

5.1.3. Inconsistency in the understanding of concepts

When measuring phenomena such as honesty it is important to ensure a similar understanding of the key concept. Head teachers were sent information about the Values in Actions inventory one week before they received a link to the questionnaire but no assurance is available of them using that information. This was decided after two of the participants in the piloting process mentioned that they thought that people might have different ideas or understandings of many of the character strengths. In the three interviews with head teachers, they all name that honesty is an important precondition for trust but only one of them was able to attempt to define the concept while the other two said it was a feeling hard to describe.

5.2. Further research

Recommendations for further research is divided into two parts; recommendations relating to the subject of this research and recommendations relating to research in the field of character strengths and leadership.
5.2.1. Recommendations relating the subject

Trust in schools in Reykjavík varies, where large portion of the schools are schools were trust is measured high but then there are some schools where trust is low or relatively low. Since trust is essential for students’ achievements it is important to research further what distinguishes the schools high in trust from those low in trust. This can be done by seeking further information from the staff about why they answer the statement *I trust my head teacher* like they do. By doing that important information about the reasons why staff trusts or distrusts head teachers will be gathered. The importance of this is to find out how to increase trust in the low-level schools.

5.2.2. Recommendations relating to the field

As discussed above, estimating honesty is a difficult process in various instances. Since honesty is regarded an important character strength for many professions it is, for obvious reasons, considered important to measure. Peterson and Seligman (2004) claim that research in the field is in its infancy and state that their contribution is perhaps only the beginning or an attempt to produce some basis for further research. Since then academics have contributed to the field but further research has to be made. It will always be controversial to estimate honesty by self-evaluation even if that method is the most commonly used. Further research has to build up a better understanding of character strengths and how to evaluate them. Perhaps that is best done by trying to understand how they relate to certain measureable outcomes through longitudinal inspections.
6. Conclusion

Since trust in schools affects students’ learning it must be important to evaluate it and examine how to build up and sustain trust. Trust is measured high in the majority of the 36 compulsory schools in Reykjavík but below the acceptable level in four schools. Educational authorities related to schools where trust is scarce must step in and take action to build up trust to facilitate teachers’ and students’ achievements. Research shows that trust is built up and sustained with certain skills and character strengths. According to Hoy and Tschannen-Moran, in order for head teachers to build up and sustain trust in their schools they need to be benevolent, reliable, competent, honest and open. To examine head teachers’ or any other leaders’ abilities for the task it is important to try to evaluate to what extent they possess the skills and character strengths needed. Various personality tests have been used to estimate character strengths, sometimes as a part of recruitment processes. Even the most widespread tests have been criticised and their developers have encouraged further studies where self-reporting outcomes are compared with certain measured outcomes. This study set out to explore if self-reported honesty amongst head teachers correlates with measured trust in schools. A correlation would indicate that self-reported honesty is a good method to measure honesty and furthermore that trust is in some ways linked with honest behaviour.

The main finding to emerge from this study is that there is not a significant correlation between measured trust in schools and head teachers’ self-reported honesty. That does not mean that there is not a correlation between honesty and trust. There can be many reasons for why correlation was not evident in this current study. The first one
discussed is the nature of self-reporting character tests but they will always be subject to self-deception biases, social-desirability biases, and self-confirmation biases. Even if there is no reason to assume the head teachers are not honest in their responses there is always the temptation to respond in terms of how you think of yourself rather than how you are, or how you like others to think of you, or even how you think others think of you. The second one is lack of distribution of the data but correlation is hard to test if the data is condensed. Self-reported honesty is always measured high with low standard deviation, meaning that generally people tend to consider themselves honest. Since mostly the head teachers from the higher ranked schools in trust responded to the honesty questionnaire, the trust measurement data used to test correlation was also condensed towards the top. Lack of participants from the schools where trust was measured low is obviously a limitation to the correlation test. The third reason mentioned is that lack of common understanding of key concepts like honesty, might have been apparent. That is, nevertheless, just a speculation.

Self-reporting character tests are widely used as a part of recruitment processes. It is by no means possible to generalise, based on the findings of this current study, that they do not provide the information they are aimed at. Still it is possible to argue that self-reporting character tests should be used consciously and results from them need to be analysed carefully. This research attempts to explore results from self-reported character tests in context with other measured outcomes as requested by scholars. The findings of this research provide information about certain limitations of self-reported character tests and should add to the discussion in the field to improve methods to evaluate the important character strengths needed to build up and sustain trust in schools.


Appendices

Appendix A – Questionnaire sent to head teachers in Reykjavík

Values and Character Strengths: Head teachers in Reykjavík

Introduction

This questionnaire is a part of a research for a MA dissertation in Educational Leadership and Management at University of Warwick. The research explores the role of virtues and character strengths in school leadership in compulsory education in Reykjavík, Iceland. Participants are all head teachers in compulsory schools in Reykjavík. The survey itself consists of five sections about you and your work environment and should take about fifteen minutes to complete. Please send any queries about the survey or the research to the researcher: o.magnusson@warwick.ac.uk

If you have lost your special participation code number for the questionnaire it can be reclaimed from SFS statistical department: eyrun.einarsdottir@reykjavik.is

Participation code

The data from this survey will be compared with data from job satisfaction survey performed by the Human Resources Department of Reykjavík. To be able to do that but still secure anonymity participants have to use the participation code number they received from SFS Statistical Department on Monday 27th March 2017.

Your participation code:
Q1 About you
This section asks about your age and time of tenure as a head teacher. This information will help to understand whether age and experience have an impact on the researched issues.

1.1 Age

○ 20-29 (1)
○ 30-39 (2)
○ 40-49 (3)
○ 50-59 (4)
○ 60-69 (5)
○ Prefer not to answer (6)

1.2 Time of tenure as a head teacher

○ <5 years (1)
○ 5>15 years (2)
○ 15 years or more (6)
○ Prefer not to answer (7)

Page Break

Q3 Your character strengths
This section of the survey is an opportunity for you to consider your character strengths. Below is a list of twenty-four character strengths. Please choose the six strengths which you think best describe the sort of person you are. Please rank these
from 1 to 6 (1 = the strongest) by dragging and dropping the six strengths into the right hand column. You can adjust the ranking by moving the strengths up and down.

Please choose the six character strengths

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Character Strength</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Appreciation of beauty / excellence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Bravery</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Creativity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Curiosity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Fairness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Forgiveness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Gratitude</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Honesty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Hope</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Humor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Judgement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Kindness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Leadership</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Love</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Love of learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Modesty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Perseverance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Perspective</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>Prudence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>Self-regulation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>Social intelligence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>Spirituality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>Teamwork</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>Zest</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Q4 Character statements
Please choose one option in response to each statement. All of the questions reflect statements that many people would find desirable, but we want you to answer only in terms of whether the statement describes what you are like. Please be honest and accurate!

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Character statements</th>
<th>Very much like me (1)</th>
<th>Like me (2)</th>
<th>Neutral (3)</th>
<th>Unlike me (4)</th>
<th>Very much unlike me (5)</th>
<th>Prefer not to answer (6)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I always keep my promises. (1)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I never hesitate to publicly express an unpopular opinion. (2)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I believe honesty is the basis for trust. (3)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am true to my own values. (4)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others trust me to keep their secrets. (5)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Page Break

Q5 What describes the ideal head teacher the best
This section asks you to think about what sort of person makes the ideal head teacher. Below is a list of twenty-four character strengths. Please choose the six which you think best describe the ideal head teacher. Please rank these from 1 to 6 (1 = the strongest) by dragging and dropping the six strengths into the right hand column. You can adjust the ranking by moving the strengths up and down.

Please choose the six character strengths

_____ Appreciation of beauty / excellence
_____ Bravery
____ Creativity
____ Curiosity
____ Fairness
____ Forgiveness
____ Gratitude
____ Honesty
____ Hope
____ Humor
____ Judgement
____ Kindness
____ Leadership
____ Love
____ Love of learning
____ Modesty
____ Perseverance
____ Perspective
____ Prudence
____ Self-regulation
____ Social intelligence
____ Spirituality
____ Teamwork
____ Zest
**Q6 Your Work Environment**

For each of the statements below please indicate how often this has been the case in the environment in which you work.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Very much like me (1)</th>
<th>Like me (2)</th>
<th>Neutral (3)</th>
<th>Unlike me (4)</th>
<th>Very much unlike me (5)</th>
<th>Prefer not to answer (6)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I am motivated to work to the best of my ability (1)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am able to apply my own ideas in my work (2)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am able to act in the best interests of my school (3)</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I experience that my employees trust me (4)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am pleased with my communications with my employees (5)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I manage to solve issues of dispute in my workplace (6)</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>I encourage my employees to work to the best of their abilities (7)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My work involves tasks that are in conflict with my personal values (8)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel at home in my workplace (9)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>At work it is difficult to do the right thing (10)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Concent

Informed consent

☐ By finishing the survey consent to participate in this research. Click here and then the forward button to finish. (1)

End of Block
Appendix B – Ethical approval

Centre for Education Studies
APPLICATION FOR ETHICAL APPROVAL

Please note: There will be a penalty of 5 marks deducted from the final dissertation mark for students who do not include a copy of this form with their dissertation submission and/or do not have this form approved by their dissertation supervisor/course leader in advance.

Name of student: Ómar Óm Magnusson
Student number: 1665827

Course: Educational Leadership and Management
Dissertation/Project title: Trust and head teachers’ attitude towards virtues
Supervisor (if known): Ian Abbott

Participants: (if children, specify age range) AND ATTACH A COPY OF YOUR DBS CLEARANCE

All 36 head teachers in compulsory schools in Reykjavik, Iceland.

Consent - will prior informed consent be obtained?
From participants? YES/NO
From others? YES/NO

Explain how this will be obtained. If prior informed consent is not to be obtained, give reason:

Written or electronic consent will be requested from all participants. All participants will be informed of the purpose and objectives of the research in detail. None of the questions in the questionnaire will be marked mandatory and the participants will have the “prefer to not answer” option for all questions. Participants will also be given two weeks to retract their consent for the whole or part of the data shared by them. The interviewees will sign a consent form where agreement and understanding is stated.

Consent will also be obtained from the Reykjavik City Department of Education and Youth and Reykjavik City Human Resources Department.

Will participants be explicitly informed of the student’s status? YES/NO

Confidentiality
Will confidentiality be assured? YES/NO
How will confidentiality be ensured?

The participants are colleagues of the researcher. They will electronically submit the questionnaire anonymously. It is important for the research to ask for age and tenure as a head teacher but no other demographic questions will be included in the questionnaire. The questionnaire will be on an online portal which will provide additional confidentiality as the researcher will receive submissions anonymously and data will automatically collate on a spreadsheet. All participants will be given a code and will be referred to by that code during the process of data collection, analysis and reporting. Anonymity of the interviewees will be ensured by using pseudo names.

Data will be looked after carefully, kept in a single copy and deleted within a year.

Even if the research does not discuss a sensitive issue a full anonymity will be secured so that it will be impossible through all the process to identify participants through the data.

Protection of participants
How is the safety and well being of participants to be ensured?

The research does not discuss a sensitive issue and the material of the dissertation could not threaten the participants’ safety or wellbeing.

Participants will fill out the questionnaire electronically and as per their convenience. This will allow them the privacy and comfort to answer the questions as they deem right and without any influence of the researcher.

Is information gathered from participants of a sensitive or personal nature? **YES/NO**

If yes, describe the procedure for
a) ensuring confidentiality

b) protecting participants from embarrassment or stress

Observational research
If observational research is to be carried out without prior consent of participants, please specify
a) situations to be observed

b) how will privacy and cultural and religious values of participants be taken into account?

Signed (Student): [Signature]
Date: 03/03/2017

Signed (Supervisor): [Signature]
Date: 03/03/2017
Action: Once both you and your supervisor have signed this form take it to your course administrator. If there are any queries, these will be logged and the form sent back to you for amendment and resubmission. Otherwise the form will be signed by your course leader and you will be able to collect a signed copy from your course administrator. The signed copy should be included as an appendix into your assignment/thesis.

COURSE LEADER TO COMPLETE

☑ Approved

☐ Approved with modification or conditions – see below

☐ Action deferred. Please supply additional information or clarification – see below

Course Leader Name: Pontso Moorosi
Signed: P.Moorosi
Date: 07/08/2017
Appendix C – Signed consent forms for the interviews

Consent Form

Title of assignment:
Self-reported honesty and measured trust
An experiment in comparing head teachers self-reported character strength and trust as measured in job satisfaction survey in compulsory schools in Reykjavik, Iceland.

Module/Course/University:
Dissertation LE901 / MA in Educational Leadership and Management / University of Warwick

Name of researcher:
Ómar Órn Magnússon

I agree to take part in the above study and am willing to be interviewed and to have my interview audio recorded.

I understand that my information will be held by the researcher for the purpose of his assignment only.

I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without giving any reason until 15th of July 2017.

I understand that the data will be kept anonymous and deleted within one year.

19.6.2017
Date
Participant – Signature

19/06/2017
Date
Researcher – Signature

Ómar Órn Magnússon
MA student at the University of Warwick in Educational Leadership and Management.
Contact information: 024 7641 8077 | 074 8426 0334 | o.magnusson@warwick.ac.uk
Consent Form

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Self-reported honesty and measured trust
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Name has been concealed to ensure anonymity

Date Participant – Signature
19/06/2017

Date Researcher - Signature

Ómar Órn Magnússon
MA student at the University of Warwick in Educational Leadership and Management.
Contact information: 024 7641 8077 | 074 8426 6534 | o.magnusson@warwick.ac.uk
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Date: 27/06/2017
Participant - Signature

Date: 19/06/2017
Researcher - Signature

Ómar Órn Magnússon
MA student at the University of Warwick in Educational Leadership and Management.
Contact information: 024 7641 8077 | 074 8426 0334 | o.magnusson@warwick.ac.uk